

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 23, 40, 45, 47, 57, 59, 63, and 67-68 as indicated below, wherein ~~deleted~~ material is shown by strikethrough and added material is underlined. In addition, please ~~add~~ claims 72-78 and cancel claims 26-27, 56, 58, and 64-65. A complete listing of claims ~~pending~~ in the application following entry of this Amendment are presented as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A sole structure of an article of footwear, the sole structure comprising:
a fluid-filled chamber having a first surface, an opposite second surface, and a sidewall
extending between the first surface and the second surface, the first surface and
the second surface being devoid of internal connections that secure interior
portions of the first surface to interior portions of the second surface, and the
sidewall being joined with the first surface and the second surface to seal the fluid
within the chamber, the first surface, second surface, and sidewall defining a
plurality of lobes extending outward from a central area, the lobes being in fluid
communication with the central area, and the lobes defining spaces positioned
between the lobes located adjacent to each other; and
a resilient material surrounding at least a portion of the chamber, the resilient material
extending into the spaces,
wherein at least a portion of the lobes extend to a side surface of the sole structure and are
exposed at the side surface.
2. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein a pressure of the fluid is in a range
of zero to five pounds per square inch.
3. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein a pressure of the fluid is
approximately equal to an ambient pressure of air surrounding the sole structure.
4. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein the fluid is air.

5. (Withdrawn) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein the first surface and the second surface have a substantially planar configuration.
6. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein at least one of the first surface and the second surface has a curved configuration.
7. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 6, wherein at least a portion of said sidewall is substantially planar.
8. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein at least a portion of said sidewall has a curved configuration.
9. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein a first portion of the sidewall is positioned adjacent the spaces, the first portion of the sidewall having a sloped configuration.
10. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 9, wherein the first portion has a first area positioned adjacent the central area, and the first portion has a second area positioned adjacent the lobes, the first area having a lesser slope than the second area.
11. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 9, wherein a second portion of the sidewall is positioned adjacent distal ends of the lobes, the second portion of the sidewall having a substantially vertical slope.
12. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein the chamber is symmetrical about a plane extending through the chamber.
13. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein a material forming the first surface, the second surface, and the sidewall is a polymer.

14. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein a material forming the first surface, the second surface, and the sidewall is a thermoplastic polymer.
15. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein the chamber includes at least five of the lobes.
16. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein the resilient material extending into the spaces forms columns of the resilient material.
17. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 16, wherein the columns contact the sidewall and are shaped to correspond with a shape of the spaces.
18. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 16, wherein the spaces and the columns extend between the first surface and the second surface.
19. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein the chamber is positioned in a heel area of the sole structure and adjacent a lower surface of the resilient material.
20. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein the resilient material is a polymer foam material.
21. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein the chamber is a bladder and the first surface, second surface, and sidewall are formed from layers of a polymer material.
22. (Original) The sole structure recited in claim 1, wherein the lobes extend radially outward from the central area.
23. (Currently Amended) An article of footwear having an upper and a sole structure secured to the upper, the sole structure comprising:

an air-filled chamber formed of a polymer material and having a first surface, an opposite second surface, and a sidewall extending between the first surface and the second surface, the sidewall being joined with the first surface and the second surface to seal the air within the chamber at an air pressure approximately equal to an ambient pressure of air surrounding the sole structure, the first surface, second surface, and sidewall defining a plurality of lobes extending outward from a central area, the lobes being in fluid communication with the central area, and the lobes defining spaces positioned between the lobes located adjacent to each other, and at least one of the first surface and the second surface has a curved configuration extending inward to define a concave surface of the chamber; and a polymer foam material surrounding at least a portion of the chamber, the polymer foam material extending into the spaces.

24. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 23, wherein the first surface and the second surface are devoid of internal connections that secure interior portions of the first surface to interior portions of the second surface.

25. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 23, wherein the lobes extend radially outward from the central area.

26-27. (Cancelled)

28. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 23, wherein the chamber includes at least five of the lobes.

29. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 23, wherein the chamber is positioned in a heel area of the sole structure and the second surface is adjacent a lower surface of the polymer foam material.

30. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 23, wherein a first portion of the sidewall is positioned adjacent the spaces, the first portion of the sidewall having a sloped configuration.

31. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 30, wherein the first portion has a first area positioned adjacent the central area, and the first portion has a second area positioned adjacent the lobes, the first area having a lesser slope than the second area.

32. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 30, wherein a second portion of the sidewall forms distal ends of the lobes, the second portion of the sidewall having a substantially vertical slope.

33. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 23, wherein the chamber is symmetrical about a plane extending through the chamber.

34. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 23, wherein the polymer foam material extending into the spaces forms columns of the polymer foam material.

35. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 34, wherein the columns contact the sidewall and are shaped to correspond with a shape of the spaces.

36. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 34, wherein the foam material extends between the first surface to the second surface.

37. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 23, wherein the chamber is a bladder.

38. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 37, wherein the material forming the bladder is a thermoplastic elastomer.

39. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 37, wherein distal ends of the lobes extend through the polymer foam material.

40. (Currently Amended) An article of footwear having an upper and a sole structure secured to the upper, the sole structure incorporating a chamber comprising:

a first surface, an opposite second surface, and a sidewall extending between edges of the first surface and the second surface, the sidewall being joined with the first surface and the second surface, and the first surface and the second surface being devoid of internal connections that secure interior portions of the first surface to interior portions of the second surface;

a fluid sealed within the chamber at a pressure that is substantially equal to an ambient pressure of air surrounding the footwear; and

a plurality of lobes extending outward from a central area, the lobes being defined by the first surface, second surface, and sidewall, and the lobes being in fluid communication with the central area,

wherein compressing the chamber increases a tension in at least the first surface the chamber is positioned in a heel region of the footwear and the lobes extend to a lateral surface and a medial surface of the sole structure, and distal ends of at least a portion of the lobes are exposed at the lateral surface and the medial surface.

41. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 40, wherein the lobes extend radially outward from the central area.

42. (Withdrawn) The article of footwear recited in claim 40, wherein the first surface and the second surface have a substantially planar configuration.

43. (Withdrawn) The article of footwear recited in claim 42, wherein the chamber includes at least five of the lobes.

44. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 40, wherein at least one of the first surface and the second surface has a curved configuration.

45. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear recited in claim 40, wherein the lobes define spaces positioned between the lobes that are adjacent to each other, and a first portion of the sidewall is positioned adjacent the spaces, the first portion of the sidewall having a sloped configuration.

46. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 45, wherein the first portion has a first area positioned adjacent the central area, and the first portion has a second area positioned adjacent the lobes, the first area having a lesser slope than the second area.

47. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear recited in claim 45, wherein a second portion of the sidewall forms the distal ends of the lobes, the second portion of the sidewall having a substantially vertical slope.

48. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 40, wherein the lobes define spaces positioned between the lobes located adjacent to each other.

49. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 47, wherein the chamber is at least partially encapsulated within a polymer foam material and a portion of the polymer foam material extends into the spaces.

50. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 49, wherein the polymer foam material extending into the spaces forms columns of the polymer foam material.

51. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 50, wherein the columns contact the sidewall and are shaped to correspond with a shape of the spaces.

52. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 50, wherein the foam material extends between the first surface to the second surface.

53. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 40, wherein the fluid is air.

54. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 40, wherein the chamber is a bladder.

55. (Original) The article of footwear recited in claim 54, wherein the material forming the bladder is a thermoplastic elastomer.

56. (Cancelled)

57. (Currently Amended) A bladder for an article of footwear, the bladder comprising:

a first surface, an opposite second surface, and a sidewall extending between edges of the first surface and the second surface, the sidewall being joined with the first surface and the second surface, and the first surface and the second surface being devoid of internal connections that secure interior portions of the first surface to interior portions of the second surface, at least one of the first surface and the second surface having a curved configuration;

air sealed within the bladder at a pressure approximately equal to an ambient pressure;

and

~~a plurality of~~ at least three lobes extending radially outward from a central area, the lobes being defined by the first surface, second surface, and sidewall, and the lobes being in fluid communication with the central area,

wherein compressing the bladder increases a tension in at least the first surface.

58. (Cancelled)

59. (Currently Amended) The bladder recited in claim 57, wherein the lobes define spaces positioned between the lobes that are adjacent to each other, and a first portion of the sidewall is positioned adjacent the spaces, the first portion of the sidewall having sloped configuration.

60. (Original) The bladder recited in claim 59, wherein a second portion of the sidewall is positioned adjacent distal ends of the lobes, the second portion of the sidewall having a substantially vertical slope.

61. (Original) The bladder recited in claim 57, wherein the lobes define spaces positioned between the lobes located adjacent to each other.

62. (Original) The bladder recited in claim 61, wherein the bladder is at least partially encapsulated within a polymer foam material and a portion of the polymer foam material extends into the spaces.

63. (Currently Amended) A bladder for an article of footwear, the bladder comprising:
a first surface and an opposite second surface; and
a parting line that forms a bond between material forming the first surface and material forming the second surface, the parting line being ~~non-centrally located with respect to the first surface and the second surface~~ formed in a sidewall of the bladder, and the parting line extending from the first surface to the second surface in at least one portion of the bladder.

64-65. (Cancelled)

66. (Original) The bladder recited in claim 63, wherein the parting line has a non-linear configuration.

67. (Currently Amended) The bladder recited in claim 63, wherein a first portion of the parting line is positioned adjacent the first surface, a second portion of the parting line is positioned adjacent the second surface of the ~~chamber~~ bladder, and a third portion of the parting line extends between the first surface and the second surface.

68. (Currently Amended) The bladder recited in claim 63, wherein a plurality of lobes ~~that~~ extend outward from a central area of the bladder.

69. (Original) The bladder recited in claim 68, wherein the lobes extend radially outward from the central area.

70. (Original) The bladder recited in claim 68, wherein the lobes are in fluid communication with the central area.

71. (Original) The bladder recited in claim 63, wherein at least one of the first surface and the second surface has a curved configuration.

72. (New) An article of footwear having an upper and a sole structure secured to the upper, the sole structure incorporating a fluid-filled chamber comprising:

a first surface, an opposite second surface, and a sidewall extending between edges of the first surface and the second surface, the first surface and the second surface being devoid of internal connections that secure interior portions of the first surface to interior portions of the second surface;

a plurality of lobes extending radially outward from a central area of the chamber, the lobes extending to a lateral surface and a medial surface of the sole structure, and distal ends of at least a portion of the lobes being exposed at the lateral surface and the medial surface.

73. (New) The article of footwear recited in claim 72, wherein the chamber includes at least five of the lobes.

74. (New) The article of footwear recited in claim 72, wherein at least one of the first surface and the second surface has a curved configuration.

75. (New) The article of footwear recited in claim 72, wherein the lobes define spaces positioned between the lobes located adjacent to each other.

76. (New) The article of footwear recited in claim 75, wherein the chamber is at least partially encapsulated within a polymer foam material and a portion of the polymer foam material extends into the spaces.

77. (New) The article of footwear recited in claim 72, wherein the chamber encloses air.

78. (New) The article of footwear recited in claim 77, wherein the air is at a pressure approximately equal to an ambient pressure of air surrounding the sole structure.